



Brunswick County Republicans watch and applaud as N. C. House majority leader Leo Daughtry burns the bank note for the GOP headquarters near Supply. Daughtry was guest speaker at the GOP grand rally and celebration Saturday.

County headquarters GOP builds on burning of bank note

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Brunswick County Republicans gathered around N. C. House majority leader Leo Daughtry and applauded Saturday as the bank note on their new headquarters went up in flames.

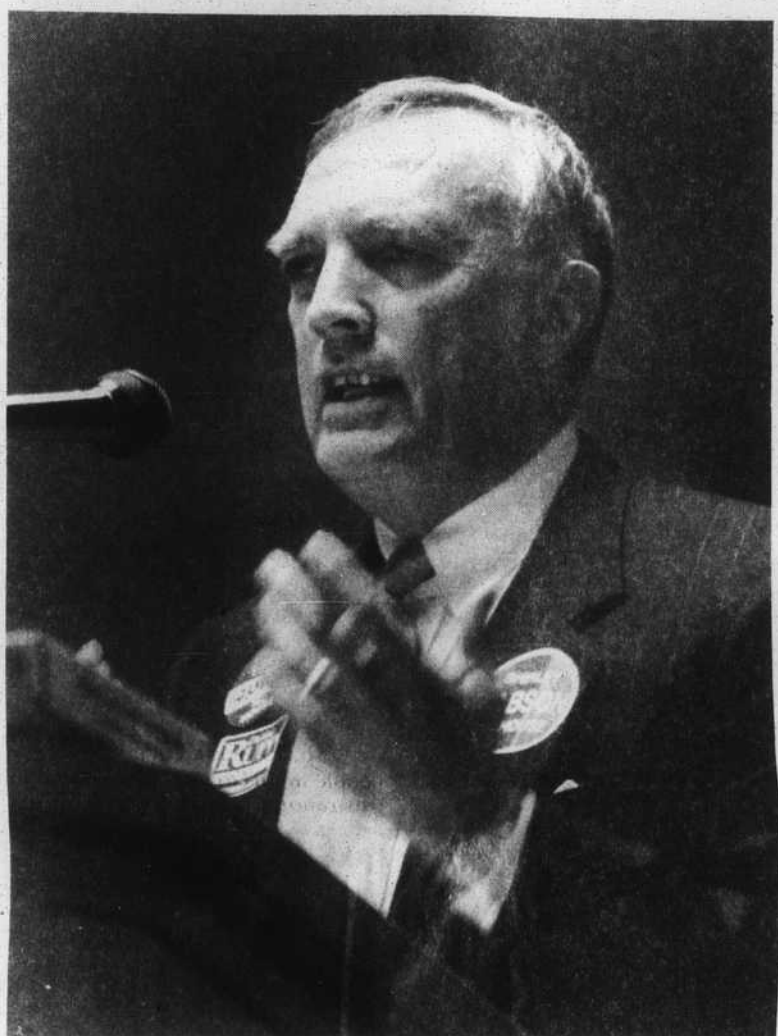
The grand rally was marked with celebration because the GOP has climbed out of debt on its building near Supply and can now turn its attention to getting a slate of Republican candidates elected in November.

"It's just a dream come true that we could have a place like this to meet in," said C. C. Murrow of Oak Island. "This is a year where we can get people elected. We don't have this albatross around our neck in trying to raise money for this building."

Daughtry was guest speaker at Saturday's rally, and he praised the GOP's effort to become a more powerful presence in what traditionally has been a Democrat-dominated county. The Smithfield native represents House District 95 and is serving his third term in the House of Representatives. He is leader of the Republican majority in the House.

"By paying off this building, this mortar, steel," said Daughtry, "you have made a statement. You have told the people of North Carolina and this county that you intend to have a good slate of candidates from now on. You have made a statement that now is our time."

The idea to seek a permanent home for county Republicans surfaced, said Murrow, at a state convention in Winston-Salem nine years ago when



N. C. House majority leader Leo Daughtry told county Republicans Saturday that Brunswick County will have its own House member following redistricting in 2000.

Malcolm Grissett and John Doshier agreed a place was needed to hold GOP meetings. At the time, former Republican sheriff Harold Willets allowed the party to meet in a small hut adjacent to the county government center near Bolivia.

A committee was appointed to find property for a permanent site. On the committee were Alton Milliken, John Doshier and Robert Maulsby. However, the party had no money and held a barbecue sale one Saturday afternoon, with a cruise to the Bahamas as a grand prize, to raise \$12,000 toward the \$15,000 price tag on the tract near Brunswick Community College.

Murrow said the group recommended to the party's executive committee that members place their names on bank notes to guarantee \$44,000 needed to construct a shell building on the tract. Approximately 25 to 30 Republicans signed for \$1,000 each in case the funds were never raised. The debt was paid off in February, 1997. Members chipped in to do the carpentry work, plumbing and wiring on their own. Republican women kept the project alive until this past fall the building was finished with a drop ceiling, paneling and carpet on the floor.

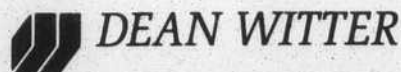
"A lot of people have been involved in this building project since the idea was conceived in 1989," said Virgil Batten, county GOP chairman. Daughtry told Republicans Saturday to look for changes in the year 2000 when the state redistricts for House seats with the GOP in control in Raleigh. He also indicated Republicans will repeal the inheritance tax in the 1998 session of the General Assembly.

Daughtry said Brunswick County was connected to Columbus County in 1990s redistricting plan to keep the 14th District in Democratic control. It is represented by David Redwine (D-Ocean Isle Beach) and Dewey Hill (D-Lake Waccamaw).

"Brunswick County is connected to Columbus County not because there is any similarity but because Democrats want to make sure there are two Democrats representing Brunswick County," said Daughtry. "In the year 2000, we're in control of redistricting and Brunswick County will have its own House member."

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